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I. Geographical Introduction

131 The habitation and roaming area of the Surára and Pakidái lies between the Demini and Aracá rivers -- a terra incognita within the large area between Rio Branco, Rio Uraricuera, Serra Parima, and Rio Negro, which up to now has been so little opened up ethnologically and geographically.

133 The Rio Demini is a left tributary of the middle Rio Negro. Its source is in the Serra Parima, in the Brazilian-Venezuelan border area, and its mouth is just above Barcelos, the former capital of "Capitania do Rio Negro." The water of this river is
133 white, whereas the numerous lakes along its banks and all its
● 134 tributaries, such as the Aracá, a right tributary of the lower Demini, have black water. The tributaries of the Aracá, on the other hand, are characterized by clear water. This peculiarity is connected with soil conditions, soil erosion, and the topography of the catchment areas. Thus, soil erosion in very mountainous terrain causes a light coloring, whereas in a very flat, swampy region dark humus substances overflow into the water and darken it. It is further noteworthy that black water is healthier and
133 tastier and, in standing, does not leave a dirty sediment. Even
136 water turtles and fish that have lived in black water are tastier than the same animals taken from white-water rivers or lakes. Moreover, it should be pointed out that mosquitoes appear in considerably smaller numbers along black water than along white. On the Rio Demini one can scarcely defend oneself from the small piuns (Simulium sp., day gnats) and the large carapanãs (Anopheles); the latter are the dangerous malaria-carriers. The lower course and part of the middle course are therefore completely fever-infested.

137 The two types of water also result in different kinds of vegetation. Characteristic for the Rio Demini are the igapós (inundated forests with tall trees standing close together), between which there is very seldom any terra firma. On the higher banks of the Aracá, however, one finds primarily low scrub-forest. The

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137 most important useful plants along the middle course of the Demini are the seringueiras (rubber trees -- Hevea brasiliensis Muell. Arg.), and along the Aracá and its tributaries the piaçaba palms (Attalea funifera Mart. and Leopoldinia piassaba Wal.). The chestnut forests that occur in the area around the mouth of the Demini and on the lower course of the Aracá also have economic significance. The chestnut, or more precisely, the chestnut of Pará (Bertholletia excelsa H.B.K. -- its fruits are known in Germany as Pará nuts), is regarded as the queen of the Amazonian primeval forests on account of its tall crown, with which it towers over all the other trees. On the lower Aracá the itaúba tree (Silvia itaiúba Pax.) is of special importance because it furnishes the best lumber in that region. Finally, a few other species of trees and palms, which occur along the Demini as well as along the Aracá, should be mentioned:

a) Trees: imbauba (Cecropia palmata Wild.), angelin-amargoso (Andira vermifuga Mart.), maçaranduba (Mimusops sp.), embireira (Anonaceae sp.), matamatazeiro (Eschweilera matamata Hub.), taxizeiro (Cesalpenaceae sp.), ingàzeiro (Inga sp.), abiurana (Lucuma sp.), cajueiro (Anacardium sp.), lucuma (Lucuma /2/ macrocarpa Hub.), wild cacao tree (Theobroma sp.), wild lemon tree (Rubiacea sp.), and cedars (Meliaceae sp.).

b) Palms: açaí (Euterpe oleracea Mart.), bacaba (Oenocarpus distichus Mart. or Oenocarpus bacaba Mart.), buriti (Mauritia vinifera Mart.), bucu (Manicaria saccifera Gaertn.), curua (Attalea spectabilis Mart.), inaja (Maximiliana regia Mart.), patauá (Oenocarpus bataua Mart.), paxiuba (Iriartea exorrhiza Mart.), pupunha (Guilielma speciosa Mart.), tucuma (Astrocaryum sp.), and ubim (Geonoma sp.).

133 The two rivers have many bends and during the summer months, October to March, flow relatively sluggishly. Their water level during this time is extremely low, so that numerous sandbanks
● [134] stand out. On the Demini the color of the sand is yellowish, whereas on the Aracá it is gleaming white. The average width of the Demini along its lower and middle course is 200-300 meters,

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241 wood is well dried out, the clearing is set afire and the potash that remains constitutes fertilizer at the same time. Large trunks, stumps, and branches that did not burn up are simply left lying [361] and the crops are planted in between (Ill. 37). Only in the center of the clearing is a circle about 50-60 meters in diameter completely cleaned up, for here an open or closed circular maloka [622] is erected. This roça (forest clearing) -- hikarí --, which surrounds the community house, is then divided up by the chief among the individual families, so that they may plant here banana plants, pupunha palms, manioc, taioba, cará, cotton, [462] tobacco, etc. (368). Clearing and planting, along with weeding,

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368. Since an interest in agriculture has not been aroused in all families, however, it happens that some may relinquish their share, which is then worked by another family.

falls to the men; the women help only with the harvest. Since [134] the soil is very infertile, however, /80/ for it has only a thin humus layer which is constantly being leached out by the tropical rains, the cultivation of tubers is possible for at most three years (369).

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369. The luxuriant growth of the forest may be explained only by the humidity and warmth of the climate, which, like hothouse air, accelerates the circulation of nutrients.

241 Then the work of clearing and burning off begins anew beyond
36 the previous circular strip of field. This may be repeated several
166 times, so that the maloka is finally surrounded by three, four, or more ring-shaped fields, until one day the tribe builds its maloka
245 at another place and lays out new fields. Banana trees and pupunha palms are left standing in the old clearings, but are always planted also in the new ones, since these fruit trees yield for 6-8 years or 50 years (pupunha palm); their fruits are regularly harvested, even on long-abandoned, distant fields.

[Namowei-tedi Group]

The new garden at Nahoyaoba-tedi did not produce satisfactorily so the Namowei-tedi established a new one south of the Orinoco River, Patanowä-tëka, and moved there about 1925-30.[1]

Area 5: Patanowä-tëka

This site has a complicated history. The Namowei-tedi lived here as one group, abandoned it, split into two villages, and each faction returned to it only to abandon it again. Ultimately the site was reoccupied by one of these factions, and that faction presently lives there.

Most of the present generation of adults in Bisaasi-tedi, Monou-tedi, and Patanowä-tedi were born at Patanowä-tëka.

Three important events took place while the Namowei-tedi lived at Patanowä-tëka. The first of these was the development of hostilities between the Namowei-tedi and a Shamatari village. As this Shamatari village figures prominently in the later history of one faction of the Namowei-tedi, I make a point of identifying it here: Sibarariwä's village, located on the Mavaca River. The approximate date of the initiation of these hostilities was 1938-40, an estimate based on the ages of older children born at Patanowä-tëka of women abducted from Sibarariwä's village. Up to the start of the war with Sibarariwä's group, the Namowei-tedi were on friendly terms with all of the Shamatari villages and visited a number of them regularly. Several marriage

[1] This is the only case I have of a garden being abandoned for soil fertility reasons.

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[128] Summary

Tables 5 and 6 broadly summarize the movements of the five villages. As the details of the text indicate, considerably more village movement goes on than can be included in tables of this sort. The micro-movements, however, merely express in greater detail what is immediately apparent from an examination of Tables 5 and 6: the Yanomamö abandon their gardens and move to new locations because of raids from other groups. In only one instance was the movement of a village stimulated by economic considerations: site 4 was abandoned by the Namowei-tedi because of poor soil. Another exception was the abandoning of Barawä (site 10) by the Bisaasi-tedi in 1959. They moved to the mouth of the Mavaca River to gain access to steel tools, marking the beginning of their sustained contact with foreigners.

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*621
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721 The tables also show that there were ten village splits relevant to explaining the origins of the five villages considered in this chapter. Five of these splits were due to feuds over women. In four of the cases the factions that were involved immediately entered into hostilities with each other. The recent split within Patanowä-tedi, discussed in the text (pp. 188-89), again over a woman, is not included in Table 5, as the refugee group did not form a new village of their own. Three village splits in Tables 5 and 6 developed out of minor feuds, usually over women, brought about by large village size. In one case, the factions ultimately entered into hostilities with each other, whereas in two cases the factions still remain on friendly terms.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

so frequent that the group elects to fission rather than attempt to keep an uneasy internal peace. Although a larger village has an advantage in terms of its capacity to raid other groups and is better able to defend itself from raids, the internal fights often lead to killings within the group. Then, there is no alternative but for one of the factions to leave. Its members may anticipate a situation like this and begin making a new garden long before the fighting becomes violent enough to lead to deaths, or a fight can develop unexpectedly and result immediately in bloodshed. The guilty faction must then seek refuge in the village of an ally until it can establish its own garden. Usually, however, the larger group fissions while its members are on relatively peaceable terms, and the two resulting villages remain in the same general area so that they can reunite when raids threaten them. This is the situation that prevails between Upper and Lower Bisaasi-teri and Monou-teri; all three have a common history as a single village, but the members of each live in separate villages because of the numerous fights that took place within the group while they were still a single village. They continue, however, to rely on each other for protection when raids threaten. The Monou-teri (see Fig. 2–8), in fact, spent about a third of their time in either Lower Bisaasi-teri or in Kąobawä's group while I conducted my fieldwork. They were being raided by the Patanowä-teri and had not completed the new garden they were making. The Patanowä-teri forced them to abandon their producing site and move west.

The Patanowä-teri themselves were forced to establish a new garden because of the incessant raids by a number of villages. In addition to keeping always on the move between their two gardens, they also sought periodic refuge in the village of one of their own allies, a village two days travel to the south of their primary garden.

The raids against the Patanowä-teri by about a dozen villages illustrate a cardinal strategy of Yąnomamö warfare: attack a group when it is beleaguered and weakened by other enemies. When I first arrived, the Patanowä-teri were fighting only three groups. The Monou-teri then entered into the conflict by abducting a number of women from them, an act that ultimately led to raiding and killing. When the Monou-teri entered the conflict, they also persuaded their own allies to participate, bringing four other villages into the war. These, in turn, were joined by some of their allies so that the total number of belligerent villages rapidly grew to about a dozen. Many of them joined the hostilities because they knew that the Patanowä-teri could not defend themselves against a host of enemies. The new belligerents, therefore, stood a good chance of abducting women while being relatively immune to punitive raids. They could also discharge obligations to their allies by supporting their raids against the Patanowä-teri without exposing themselves to great danger.

In Fig. 2–8 the movements of Kąobawä's village over the past seventy-five years is summarized. The village originated at the site of Konata, occupied prior to 1900 by Kąobawä's grandfather. This site was abandoned because several villages (not indicated on the map) began raiding the people with such frequency that they were forced to flee south, cross the Orinoco River, and take refuge with allies at a place called Wareta. Similarly, Wareta was abandoned because of new wars, so the group again crossed the Orinoco River and settled at Namowei. Here, their old enemies again drove them out of the area, so the group migrated to Hąhoyaoba. Kąobawä was born at this location, some forty years ago. This site was abandoned because the soil in that area was very poor; even to this day, there are no Yąnomamö villages located in that general area.

361 578 The group then crossed the Orinoco for the third time and settled, sometime around 1925 or 1930, at Patanowä. By this time their numbers had increased to such a level that internal feuds were frequent. As the result of many fights, the group split into two villages in about 1940, and eventually entered into hostilities. The part of the village [101] that remained behind took the name Patanowä-teri and has remained to the present at that site. Kąobawä's group fled to Shijhoca, but was driven from there to Kreiböwei by the Patanowä-teri. They occupied this site in 1950–1951, when they were massacred during a 361 feast by the members of two Shamatari villages to their south. This led them to take 726 temporary refuge in the village of Mahekodo-teri on the Orinoco River, as they had 721 not had time to make a new garden. Their site at Kobou was established while they *688 lived with the Mahekodo-teri. It was only a vantage point from which they could estab- [241] lish gardens in more suitable areas, areas that were too far removed from Mahekodo-teri to permit the establishment of the gardens in a single move. Thus, Kobou was abandoned after only a few years' occupation there.

361 Kąobawä's group split in the process of abandoning the Kobou garden in 1954, *621 a part of them taking the name Monou-teri. The Monou-teri still live at the site they [721] established in 1954, but they were in the process of abandoning it in 1966 because of [722] renewed raids from the Patanowä-teri. Kąobawä's group moved to the Orinoco again, [101] to the site called Baraiwä. By 1959 foreigners had finally reached this area, so Kąobawä [648] and his followers moved down the Orinoco to the mouth of the Mavaca River to establish contact there with a government malaria post. They hoped to obtain steel tools from the family of foreigners at the post. They split into two factions after settling, half of them moving to the opposite bank of the Mavaca River. Thus, Bisaasi-teri has an up- [101] stream and a downstream settlement, and the members of these two groups refer to themselves as the Upper and Lower Bisaasi-teri, respectively, Bisaasi being the name of a grass commonly found around gardens.

361 Similarly, the Shamatari villages, indicated as circles in Fig. 2–8, have a settlement *621 pattern characterized by internal village disputes leading to fissioning, gardens being 578 abandoned because of warfare, and a general movement to the south and west away 722 from the Orinoco headwaters. The history of the Shamatari villages is a little more 184 complicated than the history of Kąobawä's group, since village fissioning began much earlier in their moves and produced many more villages. This was probably due to the fact that their original location had more inhabitants. The history of the villages marked as hexagons on the map, Fig. 2–8, is nearly identical in its over-all pattern to the above two groups of villages.

361 Kąobawä's group and the two Shamatari villages of Mąnariböwei-teri and Reya- böböwei-teri (see Fig. 2–8) have, together, made some sixteen major moves during the [134] past seventy-five years (Chagnon 1966, Chap. V). Only one of them was stimulated by [648] poor soil conditions; one additional move was the result of the coming of foreigners. The [722] remaining fourteen major moves resulted from either raids emanating from hostile neigh- [578] bors, or internal village feuds that led to bloodshed and caused a split in the local group.[9] This should suffice to demonstrate that the political and military relationships between

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 44]

[9]This figure does not include the moves that took place while I lived with the Yąnomamö. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of these.